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NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

**To: Chief Fire Officers
Chief Executives/Clerks to Fire Authorities
Chairs of Fire Authorities
Directors of HR (Fire Authorities)**

Members of the National Joint Council

3 June 2016

CIRCULAR NJC/4/16

Dear Sir/Madam,

Advanced Level Apprenticeship in Exercise and Fitness

1. At yesterday's meetings, members of the National Joint Council (NJC) and the Middle Managers Negotiating Body welcomed the update below as an excellent example of the wider work of the NJC.

Background

2. One of the topics considered as part of the DCLG/NJC joint working group on fitness was the role and value of dedicated workplace fitness advice. There can be various ways of providing this kind of advice but the group recognised that it would be important for such advisers to have the appropriate skills and training to undertake such an activity.
3. This was discussed further outside of the group given a joint interest in learning and development and a potential role for watch or station based fitness advisers. Discussions were mindful of the financial constraints fire and rescue services are working within.
4. The FBU has developed a programme through their National Learning Centre and in partnership with Leeds City College for delivery in England. This programme is an Advanced Level Apprenticeship in Exercise and Fitness which will enable successful students to qualify as a Level 3 Personal Trainer. The 15 month learning programme will require students to develop their knowledge and understanding of anatomy, physiology, fitness and nutrition, and will consist of the following knowledge and competency based qualifications:
 - NCFE Level 3 Certificate in Personal Training
 - NCFE Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Personal Training
 - NCFE Level 3 Award in Employment Awareness in Active Leisure and Learning
 - NCFE Functional Skills Qualification in English and Maths at level 2
5. The programme requires students to commit to a 15 month programme of study involving one day a month attendance at classroom based sessions, gym and practical based assessments and tutorials.

6. The programme can be delivered locally within services subject to the number of students and facilities available. Tutors will be provided through the FBU. To support the programme, an FRS is asked to:
 - Advertise the programme within the FRS
 - Assist with enrolments
 - Provide a dedicated point of contact in each FRS who can book dates and organise staffing to allow learners to attend
 - Organise mop up days for learners who are on shift or who cannot attend on programmed days
 - Provide classrooms or study areas with White Boards that can be booked all day
 - Provide access to appropriate fire station gyms or book their equivalent for the back-end of the course when practical sessions will take place
 - Fully commit to their ongoing involvement for the duration of the 15-month programme and allow participants the one-day a month required for course attendance
7. The partnership approach to this programme will be of benefit to fire and rescue services as they look to support the fitness of their employees, as well as a good opportunity for the people who take part in the programme to utilise the skills they gain.
8. Students do not have to be FBU members or have already studied at level 2.
9. We wrote jointly to all services in England in February to gauge interest.

Current position

10. 26 services indicated that they wished to be involved in the initial programme and a further 5 indicated interest for the future.
11. The FBU is currently contacting the 26 services to put arrangements in place to allow the students to enrol and for the course to begin. Induction and enrolment sessions will begin shortly with East Sussex FRS being the first fire and rescue service.
12. We are currently exploring whether the apprenticeship can count towards the government apprenticeship levy.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

13. Due to the funding position this opportunity can only be offered to FRAs in England at the present time. We continue to explore with the FBU whether it would be able to secure funding to provide something similar in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Yours faithfully
SIMON PANNELL
MATT WRACK
Joint Secretaries